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SUBJECT: "THE ANGOLAN" ELECTORAL NEWS BULLETIN, VOL VIII

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1. (C) In This Issue:

- Parties Wrap Up Campaign Period
- UNITA Predicts Holding 3 Seats in Huambo
- Credentialing Problems for Observers and Monitors
- Insufficient Civic Education Creates Confusion in Benguela
- Possible SINFO Engagement in Electoral Process
- Villagers Eject Police, UNITA

Parties Wrap Up Campaign Period

1.2. (U) The mood in Luanda was festive on September 3rd, the final day of the official 30-day campaign period. The GRA called a last minute national holiday to "allow people to fully participate" in the last day of campaigning, and caravans of cars, trucks, and taxivans filled with chanting supporters of various parties zoomed through city streets throughout the day. Both the MPLA and UNITA have pulled out all the stops in the past few days, filling the streets with waving banners and party flags that had been noticeably lacking through much of the campaign. Both MPLA President Jose Eduardo dos Santos and UNITA President Isaias Samakuva gave speeches closing their respective campaigns before cheering crowds in Luanda. One reporter present at both rallies told the Embassy that, while the MPLA crowd was noticeably larger than UNITA's, it was nowhere near the million supporters the party said it would rally. Notably, Samakuva closed UNITA's campaign in Cazanga, a municipality known as an MPLA stronghold, whereas Dos Santos and the MPLA chose Cacuaco, an area known to swing towards UNITA. One Embassy local staff member said with surprise "This would have been unthinkable just a few years ago."

UNITA Predicts Holding 3 Seats in Huambo

1.3. (C) In a September 2 meeting, Alcides Sakala, a UNITA parliamentarian and head of UNITA's Huambo campaign, told said that his party has faced severe difficulties throughout the campaign in UNITA's traditional heartland, namely restricted access and destruction of the party's propaganda materials. A "very tired" Sakala noted that traditional leaders denied UNITA representatives access to over 320 villages in Huambo, and other traditional leaders told UNITA they could not display a UNITA flag in their village. Embassy observers were surprised to see very little UNITA party propaganda in Huambo city; Sakala said the city had

been "covered" in UNITA material, but that it had all been torn down by the youth wing of the MPLA (JMPLA) several days prior. Sakala believes that the destruction was the result of a "directive" issued to the JMPLA, rather than "kids being kids." A contact at the Dutch Embassy confirmed that, during a recent trip to Huambo, propaganda materials were widely evident upon his arrival, but were almost all gone the following day. He noted that the materials were torn down after President dos Santos's visit to Huambo, and, therefore, were not part of an attempt to "de-UNITA-fy" the city for the President.

14. (C) Sakala posited that the purpose of the MPLA's "fear and intimidation" tactics was to promote absenteeism in UNITA's traditional base. Despite this, he predicts his party will hold on to three of their four seats in Huambo following the September 5 elections. Of the other two seats, he predicts one will go to the MPLA and one to a third party, potentially PRS, PAJOCA, or PDP-ANA.

Credentialing Problems for Observers and Monitors

15. (SBU) On September 3, representatives from civil society and UNITA complained to the Embassy that the CNE is refusing to credential their full cadre of electoral observers in Luanda and Huambo provinces. According to officials with the Plataforma Eleitoral, the national organization for civil society election observers, the CNE notified the group that their plan to credential 350 observers in Luanda was "excessive" and that only 60 observers would be credentialed. In Huambo, Alcides Sakala, head of UNITA's Huambo campaign

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Sakala, noted that UNITA is also having problems getting credentials for UNITA election monitors in the province. He admitted, though, that it was too early to tell if this is a deliberate roadblock to their observation efforts, or simply a logistical hitch caused by CNE's failure to deploy technological assets sufficiently early.

16. (C) To clarify the CNE's position, Ambassador Mozena called Ambassador Joaquim Lemos, head of the CNE's credentialing unit. Lemos assured the Ambassador that some additional credentials would be issued to the Plataforma. The Ambassador reminded Lemos that GRA actions to limit the number of credentialed observers would affect the international assessment of the credibility of Angola's electoral process.

Possible SINFO Engagement in Electoral Process

17. (C) A member of the EU observation mission privately relayed to the Embassy her concerns regarding the GRA's internal intelligence service (SINFO) possible involvement at all levels of the electoral process. She was told by "numerous, impeccable sources" that SINFO agents were being employed as polling station workers and accredited as political party monitors and civil society observers. The SINFO agents are reportedly responsible for reporting vote tallies directly to President dos Santos's election team. The Embassy has heard similar reports from other sources in civil society and from political party leaders in the provinces, but cannot confirm SINFO involvement.

Insufficient Civic Education Creates Confusion in Benguela

18. (SBU) In a meeting with local civil society organizations, the Embassy Benguela Observation Team was told many residents do not understand the electoral process and do not trust the secrecy of the vote. According to these groups, who have been doing civic education funded by UNDP, the separation of the ruling MPLA and the state is so narrow that many citizens believe that, as the government issued their voter

registration cards, they must for the MPLA.

¶9. (SBU) The team also reported seeing thick crowds of people at CNE electronic kiosks, where people can swipe their registration cards to confirm the location their assigned polling station. Many people waiting held thick handfuls of cards, and explained they were confirming polling stations for neighbors, family, and friends. At one location two MPLA trucks pulled up with several small boxes of cards... a savvy way to make sure the party gets its supporters to the right polling station on election day.

Villagers Eject Police, UNITA

¶10. (SBU) War memories linger in Benguela, according to the EU's long-term observations in the province. They reported villagers in a small southern village attacked both UNITA representatives and their police escorts when the UNITA delegation came calling. Evidently, during one particularly memorable UNITA attack on the village in the 1990s, the police fled and abandoned the villagers. The villagers, who evidently haven't forgiven either group, briskly showed them all to the city gates.
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